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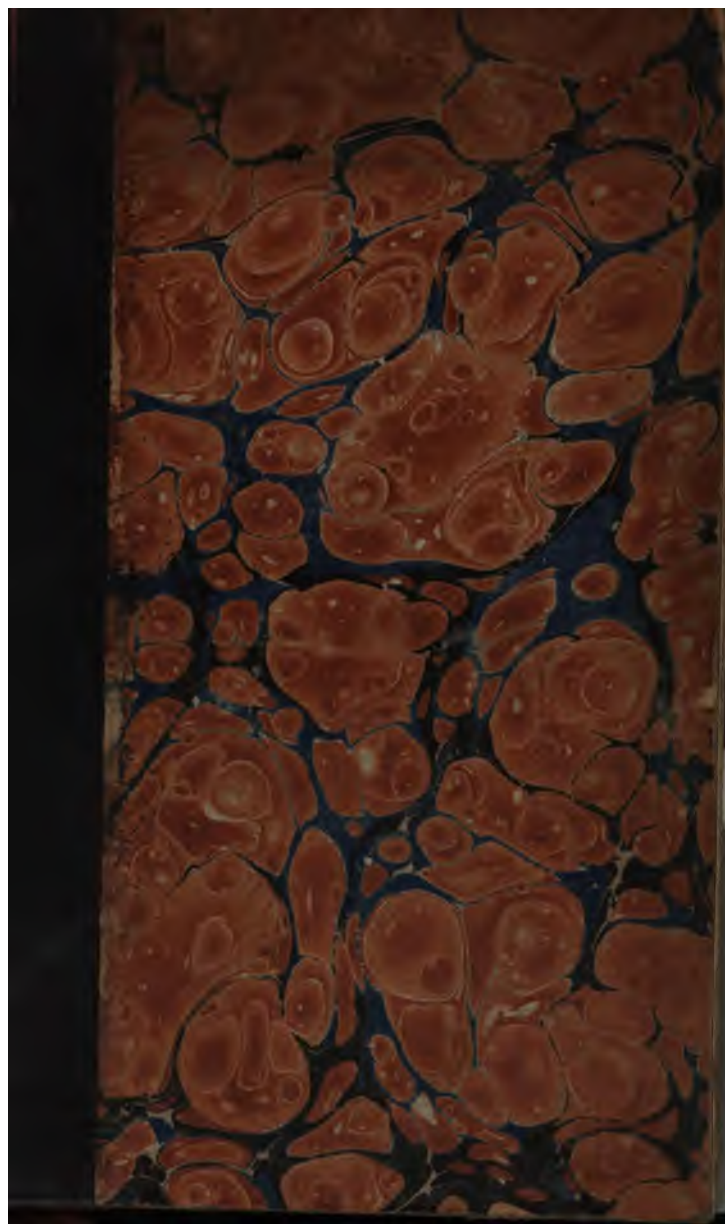
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C. D. W. H. H.

AN ACCOUNT
OF
A RELIGIOUS SOCIETY
IN
NORWAY,
CALLED
S A I N T S :
WITH A FEW LETTERS WRITTEN BY SOME
OF THEM.
ALSO,
SOME INTERESTING PARTICULARS
RELATING TO
Several Prisoners on Board a Danish Ship,
WHO WERE CONVINCED OF THE
PRINCIPLES OF FRIENDS,
FROM THE YEAR 1812 TO 1814.

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1814. *L 70.*

ST. 1712



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INTRODUCTION.

THE principal part of the following account, was taken from the mouth of the individual who was first drawn into silent worship, on board a Danish prison ship off Chatham. He had been a prisoner about seven years, and had obtained his intelligence respecting the people called *Saints*, from one or more of his countrymen, who had been, or who were connected with them. The circumstances related in these few pages discover, that “the ways of Divine Providence are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.” In the former part of the narrative, it will evidently appear,

that the original founder or leader of the persons called Saints, was prepared to become a servant of the Lord. He entered into covenant with him; and by keeping his eye steadily fixed on his heavenly guide, (though in bonds for his sake,) he has become an eminent instrument in his hand. We may here see what may be done by faithfulness; many persons, who before they had heard of this pious man, had perhaps, never been imbued with the truths of the Gospel, but, through his means, have been induced to bend to its sacred influence; and, it is to be hoped, the seed has in many instances, been sown in good ground, to the glory and praise of the great and good Husbandman.

The latter part equally displays, the wisdom, the power, the goodness of Israel's shepherd to the poor prisoners. *It brings it to a demonstration, that*

he is able to pour “out his Spirit from on high; to make the wilderness a fruitful field, and the fruitful field to be counted for a forest.” How can we sufficiently recount his mercies, or his goodness to the children of men? The pious mind cannot but rejoice that Omnipotence is thus lifting up his standard in the nations: that he is calling a people from afar, and “making their wilderness like Eden, and their desert as the garden of the Lord.”

It is hoped the following little narrative may encourage many of us who have not had so difficult a path to tread, (the road having been broken up ready to our hand,) to examine whether the comparative ease, and many outward blessings some of us have enjoyed, have been productive of faithfulness to the heavenly call; or have produced so much gratitude &c

favours received, as that so full a dedication and surrender have been made, as too many well know has been required of them. If in the retrospect, we should be sufficiently humble to feel and acknowledge our deficiencies, and so wise as to recur to our first convictions of the blessed truth, and through Divine help, suffer no impediment to take place towards fulfilling what may be our allotted duty, there is good ground to hope, "that in righteousness we shall be established;" and when we have done with time, shall obtain a rich reward, "and great will be our peace."

AN
ACCOUNT, &c.

ABOUT thirty years since, there arose a man in the East of Norway, whose name was Hans Neilson Houghe, who believed much as Friends do, respecting "the universal and saving light." His awakening, first impressions, and conviction of it, were remarkable. Being on board a boat laden with straw or hay, it was by some accident overset, and he was in imminent danger of losing his life. In his extremity he cried to the Almighty for help; and promised, if He would preserve him from his present danger, he would serve Him as long as he lived. He was heard; and in a marvellous manner he experienced preservation. He

very soon afterwards apprehended it his duty to leave his employ, and give himself up wholly to the Divine will; and therefore he travelled on foot into different parts of the country, and into Denmark; endeavouring to impress on the minds of the people, the necessity of repentance; to turn to the Lord; and to attend to the light of truth in the heart, in order to be enabled to keep his commandments. As he could not unite himself to any of the churches he was acquainted with, on account of the mixture in them, he endeavoured to establish a church similar to that of the first Christians, in order to obtain an union upon true Christian principles.

After a time, by preaching, (apprehending himself called to the ministry,) and writing what his religious principles *were; which being* in opposition to the

sentiments of the hired priests, (in most of whom he saw great inconsistencies, both as to principle and practice,) he at last was much persecuted by them. But notwithstanding this was the case, he found that the truth prevailed among many innocent persons, who joined with him; and many individuals, both *women* and men, were raised up to declare the same truth; and they accordingly went round the country, endeavouring to persuade the people to repent and follow this Divine light. These also, in their turn, were persecuted, and were much misrepresented; and, after a time, they were called, by way of derision, Saints. In many places their principles were not accepted: and it was here many falsehoods concerning them were raised.

Being ill treated and persecuted by *their neighbours*, many of them sold their

habitations, and found it necessary to live more closely together. The use they made of their property, was for the Lord's service; for the purchase of books; for the relief of the necessitous; or for the spread of their gospel principles. In process of time, they became a respectable body of people. Some became merchants and traders to a considerable extent: and their numbers greatly increased. But by the preaching of the Priests, who took much pains to misrepresent them, many falsehoods were circulated: one was, that the property which had been disposed of, and which, by trade, had much accumulated, had been received and appropriated to the use of Hans Neilson Houghe. This report having reached the ears of the magistrates of Bergen, (the place where the greatest part of their ships and merchandise were deposited,) they

concluded to seize upon the whole of it, and sold it. They also took Hans N. Houghe, and put him in prison in Christiana* Here he was not only deprived of the company of his friends, but was also denied the use of his Bible, or pen and ink; nor was he even permitted to speak to any of the other prisoners. To show the truly Christian disposition of this poor man, when he was seized by the officers, in order to commit him to prison, and his hands and his feet were put in irons, and he was otherwise used very roughly,

* There is a law in Norway, which makes real property, of some kinds, hereditary; and, it was supposed, that it was on the presumption that such property had been disposed of without the consent of those who were interested in it, that the magistrates seized on the whole of what belonged to these persons. And H. N. H. being considered as the instrument who had caused this law to be broken, this, it was supposed, was the plea for his imprisonment.

he bore it all with the greatest patience; saying, when he willingly stretched out his hands to have the irons put on: "I rejoice I am worthy thus to suffer persecution for the Lord's sake: and though you have taken away my outward property, you cannot take away my inward peace;" which had such an effect on the multitude who stood by, that many of them afterwards became converts to his religious principles. The last accounts which have come from Norway respecting him, which were in 1813, say that he was still a prisoner. In consequence of this very severe trial, many of these persons were obliged to give up their books, to leave Bergen, and to live separately, with this injunction; that, if they presumed to preach, circulate, read, or keep any books concerning their opinions, *they also* should be put in prison. And

that no person should purchase any books which treated of their principles: if they did, they should be subject to a severe penalty. It was, notwithstanding, some consolation to them, that those who had not resided wholly at Bergen, their property had not been disturbed, by which they were enabled to assist those who were driven from thence, who commenced trade in other places. Though they are under the above restrictions, they still endeavour to circulate their principles; and when they have opportunity, they meet at one another's houses.


It should be noted, that some of the magistrates did not see any thing wrong in their writings; and there is some reason to suppose, that all their books are not destroyed.

Hans Neilson Houghe was not a very long time in irons: and when he had

them taken off, he said, "he did not feel near the comfort then, as he had done when they were put on." He has frequently been told by the magistrates, that he might quit the prison; but he has refused to accept his discharge, till they would give a sufficient reason why they had imprisoned him, and taken his property, and that of his friends. He notwithstanding frequently avails himself of so much of the liberty granted him, of walking out occasionally, and visiting his friends, and meeting with them for religious purposes. On account of the war, there being a great want of salt, and he knowing the chemical process of obtaining it, he was permitted to go to the western part of Norway, and other places, in order to erect salt-works, which having done, he voluntarily returned to his prison.

Among those who apprehended themselves called to the ministry, were two blind men; who, though born blind, had so perfect a knowledge of the Scriptures, that they could refer to any part of the Bible, during what they had to say to the people they ministered to. They sometimes went into the grave-yards, and addressed those who came from their worship, preaching repentance to them.

These persons, who are called Saints, though a few of them retain some of the ceremonies of the Lutheran church, such as baptism, and the Lord's supper, yet they have a testimony against war, oaths, and an hireling ministry; but, through human weakness, some of them, when commanded by the magistrates, (whom they have conceived it a Christian duty to obey,) have taken up arms.



We shall now give some account of the persons who were convinced of the principles of Friends on board the Danish prison-ship lying off Chatham.

During the war between Denmark and England, about the year 1812, two Norwegians, prisoners, became seriously impressed with the sin of swearing, they being in the habitual practice of blaspheming, and taking the sacred name in vain. While in this situation of mind, many other things were pointed out in the secret of their hearts as sins, which they had never considered as such before, and which they were desirous of attending to. Thus they became deeply humbled, under a sense of their own corrupt state, and of their inability of themselves to refrain from evil; which led them into secret prayer to the Almighty, for his help. While they were under this exer-

cise, one of the men called Saints came a prisoner on board the ship, and as they observed he was not in the practice of swearing, like the other prisoners, they were very soon induced to get acquainted with him; which they considered as a great blessing, he instructing them in his religious sentiments, and in endeavouring to promote the principle of truth in their hearts. One of these young men, named Enoch Jacobson, became particularly serious, and felt much comfort in being alone, and pouring out his whole soul to the Almighty. The other young men, seeing him thus seriously engaged, joined with him in quietly sitting down to wait upon the Lord. They obtained leave of the commander to build themselves a little room, where they could sit to perform their religious worship. After a time, they were removed to another ship.

ship, where E. J. discovered that a person on board had a Barclay's Apology in the Danish language ; and though he had never heard of the Society of Friends, or of their principles, yet he had a great desire to read it. The person who had it, told him, that while he was a prisoner at Plymouth, a Friend came on board the ship he was in, and left two of these books among the prisoners, and having possessed himself of one of them, he had the curiosity to read it: he also lent it to E. J. who, on diligently perusing it, discovered that he could unite in the principles of Friends, and endeavoured to prevail on his two companions to do the same ; which at first they were not willing to do, but after a short time they did fully.

About this time, E. J. wrote a letter, *addressed to the people called Quakers,*

which he requested a person who came on board the prison-ship, to deliver to any one of that persuasion they could meet with, and which, at last, got to the hands of a Friend at Chatham. Owing to the then restrictions respecting prisoners, the Friend could not get on board the prison-ship till some weeks after; but, in the mean time, these persons were supplied with some Friends' books. After a while, other of the prisoners observing their serious and exemplary conduct and deportment, united with them, till, by degrees, their numbers have amounted to twenty-eight. Many sweet seasons of the humbling influence of divine goodness were experienced by them; and they afterwards received several visits from Friends, who were oftentimes refreshed with them, under a sense of the loving-kindness of *their Heavenly Father* overshadowing this *little company*.

In one of these religious opportunities, when they were visited by three friends, there were twelve of these persons present, whose deportment was so singularly serious and attentive to what they were met about, viz. to perform religious worship, that, though five of them did not understand the English language, the friends chose *not* to have an interpreter. The sweet emanation of heavenly goodness during the silent part of this meeting, as well as when two of the friends communicated their feelings, was remarkable; there not being one present who was not affected in an extraordinary manner, and in tears. To those who were visiting them, when they reflected, that most of these men had been brought up as warriors, the very countenances of some of them showing marks of great courage—*that, through the power of truth, their*

natures had been changed from the ferocity of the lion, to the innocence of the lamb; or rather, their evil natures had been by this power transformed into the simplicity of a little child—they were filled with admiration. They could say in truth, “this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.”

These poor men were moulded into that disposition, which acquiesced in the will of their Heavenly Father. He, making the prison-ship as a palace to them; and though they were in outward captivity, they were, in the truest sense of the word, the Lord’s freemen. Thus were the keenest trials turned into the greatest of blessings; and, from a state of murmuring at these dispensations of a kind Providence, they were enabled, through these very dispensations, to sing praises to the name of the Most High.

One of them, when asked by a Friend, whether they ever in their meetings exhorted one another, gave this memorable answer—“ *Ah, no! the power is enough!*” A lesson to many who profess that their spiritual life is strengthened by silently communing with the Lord of Life and Glory, but who too often are craving after outward food; not being contented to wait for the hidden manna, which, to the redeemed mind, is the pure eternal substance.

E. J., the young man who was first led into silent worship, seeing that the religious turn which had taken place in the ship, was promotive of the sweetest sensations to those who had accepted the gracious invitation, “to taste and see how good the Lord is,” was induced, in 1813, to send letters to several serious *persons in Norway*; and also, Barclay’s

Apology, Penn's Key, and Dell on Baptism, in the Danish language. He also translated into the same language, Penn's Rise and Progress, and sent with them; but he has had no certain intelligence of all of them being received; though some of the letters are acknowledged, as may be seen by the copy of the following letter to him, from Peter Schivelland, from Arendahe. There are also added three other letters or epistles, written by some of those called Saints, which, as they are remarkable for their simplicity, as well as for the Christian truths they contain, may not be unacceptable; as it will show, that, however outwardly separated from each other, Christ's sheep know his voice; they speak the same language; and, though under deep trials and provings, are, notwithstanding, willing to follow him.

(Copy.) To Enoch Jacobson.

Arendahe, 8th of 3d Month, 1813.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,


THY loving letters to the friends in Christiansand, are received: they rejoiced us much. Some other of our friends who are living in some other trading towns, as well as myself, have obtained copies of them.

I perceive, by thy letter to friend J. B. in Christiansand, that thou desirest to be informed if those letters were received or not; but I apprehend he has not had any opportunity to send thee an answer; but as Conrad Forst, from this town, is about to sail for London, I send thee these few lines; and I have also enclosed copies of two letters, which we have lately received *from our dear friend H. N. H., who is in*

gaol; and one from Anna Halvors Daller. I thought it might give thee a little comfort when thou read them. And it would be likewise pleasant to us, if thou wast able to translate these copies to the friends in England: it might perhaps kindle a fresh fire and zeal towards the good in this country. I desire now to inform thee who I am, who write these lines: I am thy acquaintance, who lived near the apothecary's shop where thou resided: the shop still remains. My trade is merchandise. Oh, my friend! it gave me great surprise when I read the copy of thy letters. I wish thou may be an instrument of good in the hand of the Lord, and hope thou wilt be preserved from pride. Give God alone the honour; that thou, as well as myself, may be preserved in humility. I give thanks to the *Almighty God* for his precious grace.

which he has given us through the Gospel, and the love of his Son, who innocently died for us. I perceive it is thy desire that the number of his followers may increase. I wish, with all my heart, that the Lord may give thee wisdom and power. Here are a little number of friends in most of the towns in this country, but the number I cannot tell. I hope they will multiply; but our care is great, that goodness may increase amongst us.

I wish, my friend, these lines may reach thee; and it would be pleasant to me, if thou couldst let me have a few lines from thee, and procure me a correspondent among the Friends, or Quakers, to whom we desire to give our love. Likewise, if thou should think it profitable, let us know what kind of goods we could send over, to relieve our fellow-brethren. Give our love to Andres; and be thyself



saluted in dear love ; and live well in the peace and love of God.

PETER SCHIVELLAND.



*Copy of an Epistle from Hans
Neilson Houghe.*

The Prison at Christiana, 1813.

DEAR LOVING BRETHREN AND SISTERS,

OH! how glad I am, whenever I think of you, and other dear friends whom God hath called, and on whom his love is poured out and received. Let us affectionately love one another, and be zealous in every good work, as stewards of God; and, by his help, labour that we may get a little to do good with, and to meditate how that good may best be shed abroad, that our lights may shine in the world. But although our love and

desire may be to do good to our fellow-believers, and is one great duty, yet Christ has taught us to do good to, and to love, our enemies. If we do this, we shall experience, that we shall be happy when we return good for evil. Think of the best means to arouse them from their indifference and lukewarmness; let us serve them in every thing we can: thus let our love be perfect towards them—this may, perhaps, operate towards their improvement; then will our enemies become our friends, and we shall be happy. Let us, by all means, show the excellence of truth and virtue. Once more I repeat, how glad I am, in considering that we are called to this great and important work. Ah! how dreadful, that by trouble and despair, any should flee from this great and happy *object*. Oh! brethren and sisters! called *Christ to be heavenly joint heirs with*

him, we have read that many have given way, and have turned from him, and left their first love. Oh! it seems thus to have happened, that many have turned their minds to the world again; to self-interest, covetousness, and vanity. Oh! brethren and sisters! let us, who, through indifference, may have given way to any of these things, beware of extinguishing the fire which has been kindled; let us more and more long after it, that our hearts may be the more inflamed by it; and let us entreat the Lord, that he would pour his Spirit thereon.

We often commune together, particularly every first-day night; and I have thereby often been moved to tears, and been strengthened to believe, that my hopes would yet be accomplished; that grace may, through the Lord, be renewed by me and others, who may be called to *advocate* His cause. Oh! pray the L

with me, that this may be the case, and that the wicked may be hindered of their design of my destruction, and of continuing me in prison, which yet holds me. But let us, above all, pray that neither the snares of the world, nor the ease of the flesh, should in this work, make us more indifferent or worldly-minded.

I have been a little moved about my earthly father's sudden death; I remember, in my youth he was earnestly desirous to give me instruction about God, and that I might be faithful to him.

I give my love to you all, my friends, and earnestly desire that the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered death for our salvation, may be ingrafted in us all, that, by receiving his saving grace, and keeping it in our hearts, we may live a blessed life here and for ever. *Amen.*

HANS NEILSON HOUGH.

From the same.

The Prison at Christiana, 1813.

TO the called in the Lord's vineyard, as well as to those who have laboured long, and having given proof of their faithfulness, have been chosen; grace, peace, and a blessed life, be with you, after the commandments of Jesus Christ; you are all saluted by many friends, who have been here from different parts.

My weakness, and other peculiar circumstances which accompany me, is the cause why I have been hindered from writing. Though it may not do so much good, or afford so much encouragement, as I could wish; yet, often is my heart burning and much longing, to write a little to you and others, for your encouragement. It seems that the power of the world is great, which often hinders; yet it perhaps may be my weakness

partly because I cannot do any good ; and thereby I am afflicted on account of the little good I am able to perform. I received an acceptable letter from a schoolmaster from Halingdahl, and also one from Engobor Morsmartien: the subject of both was very similar. The heart of the former was in much feeling about his own salvation, and the gracious visitation of the Lord. He was much grieved at the wickedness of the world, which seemed to overcome the good ; and gave his opinion, that he feared many would grow lukewarm and indifferent, notwithstanding we had been favoured with so much experience, which ought to induce us, in a greater degree, to follow that which was good. Some had already forgotten the fear of the Lord, and the love of Christ ; and some again were supposed *to be of us, but were not so, because of their irreligious conduct, &c.*

I also may confess I am grieved about myself; that it seems clearly we all want encouragement and comfort from each other, concerning the will of God and his power, that we may follow the footsteps of Jesus, lest we should be too much like those who are not sufficiently concerned to know God, and to do his will. Many times I have lamented this with tears, and with a sincere heart admonished both myself and others, to be careful about the most important work; and truly, with an upright heart, I would willingly do all in my power to declare the truths of the gospel.

My dear love is to the sister from Mosmarken: I wish her patience, steadily to go on in the work to which she is called. And if any of us should not be acquainted with each other in the body, let us each day endeavour to know each other through *the Spirit of Christ*.

HANS NEILSON HOUGH

An Epistle from Anna Halvors Daller,

Dated Guwtras, 21st of 2nd Month, 1813.

*Dear loving and often remembered Sisters in
Christiansand,*

YEA, I say with a loving heart, which is true, that I love you greatly for your faith and virtue, which you have received through an awakening grace; which leads to an upright conversation, and increases in good works, which are the fruits of faith: but we must remember, that every branch in Christ, which brings forth fruit, will certainly be purged, that it may bring forth more fruit, which is the promise of Jesus, and it will never fail. My desire and hope is this; that you, with myself, may work out your own salvation: and be ye clothed *with the light* which will lead you in the *right way*. Attend to that power which

first awakened you, since you cannot but be convinced it is to your greatest advantage. Why then should you be required to be entreated to do that which is your truest interest? The Scriptures are often peculiarly lively to me in my solitude: and I have read, to-day, of the four kinds of ground, wherein the seed was sown, which brought me into great thoughtfulness, that so small a part of the ground sown should produce fruit, the devil trying to destroy it. Oh, let the Lord preserve us from every snare! and let our earnest desires be, that we may help each other, and be good examples. And I hope those who are diligent in reading the Scriptures, will be led in the ways of wisdom, which, it is my great desire and longing, may be the case for myself; but I have often to fight with many infirmities; for truly, our fallen nature desires *very little good.*

Salute brother N. B., who, I am glad to hear, with other brethren, experience both joy and life: thus, with an upright heart, will the good work be increased. My desire is, that we may all follow each other in the path to heaven, which is our true resting place. This is my earnest prayer: wishing you every thing that is good, I am

Your friend,

ANNA HALVORS DALLER.

THE END.

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